Locke, J. Miller, W. C. Mylne, R. Stephenson, F. Taylor, J. F. Bateman, Sir J. Mac Neill, and T. Sopwith, members; Lieut.-Col. Colquhoun and S. M. Peto, associates.

The annual report of the council announced the past session to have been one of unexampled brilliancy, and the actual position of the institution to be very flourishing in every respect.

Telford medals were presented to Messrs. P. C. Delegarde and G. Edwards, and premiums of books to Messrs. Vulliamy, Bodmer, and Redman, for papers read last year at the meetings.

The opportunity of the presentation of the annual report, was seized by the council for explaining succinctly to the general body, their intentions in proposing modifications of the existing bye-laws. From the statement, it appears, that the present bye-laws are based upon a code of regulations framed when the charter was granted, and by these the institution has been governed since 1828. The great progress, however, made by the profession of engineering, demanded certain modifications, which have been made from time to time by the council, but always within the spirit and meaning of the actual laws. These they now seek to incorporate in the code of laws, in order that all the members may be cognisant of them. It is proposed that the members should form the first class, the associates the second, and the graduates the third class, the latter being assimilated to the student class of other societies. The associates are raised to the second class, on account of their acknowledged value in the society, and the efficient aid at all times given by them in every step tending to the advancement of the profession.

It is proposed that the president should be changed every two years, in order to secure a rotation of the office among the members, and render the attainment of the post an object of ambition, and an incentive to industry and perseverance among the younger members of the profession. Some opposition was expressed to these views of the council, which, however, appeared to meet the wishes of the majority, and the council announced their intention of presenting the proposed modifications for the discussion of the special meeting of members summoned for January 27th.

EARLY CARVINGS IN WOOD.

At recent meetings of the Society of Antiquaries, many interesting communications have been read. Amongst them may be mentioned a letter from Mons. Delapierre, secretary of the Belgian Legation, relative to a document discovered amongst the Records in Flanders. He stated that numerous evidences of the connection which subsisted between England and that country in ancient times, had fallen under his notice, tending to prove the Flemish origin of many works of art or decoration still preserved in England. The works of the Flemish carvers in wood were in especial esteem, and numerous fine examples exist in the churches of Norfolk and other parts of England, which may be regarded as their productions. The document found by Mons. Delapierre related to a dispute which had occurred at Bruges, in the year 1441, between William Carebis, a Scotch merchant, and a certain monk of Melrose Abbey, acting on behalf of the abbot of that monastery, and Cornelius de Aeltre, citizen of Bruges, and master of the art of carpentry, who had agreed to supply certain stalls for Melrose, after the fashion of the stalls in the Abbey Church of Dunis, in Flanders, and carved according to the design of those which existed in the choir of Thoam, near Bruges. The work had been impeded by popular commotions at Bruges, during which the master carver had been deserted by his workmen, and suffered severe losses. It is thought that many similar evidences exist in the archives of Flanders, which would throw light on the History of Art in England, and shew the extent of that influence which the productions of our continental neighbours exerted at various times in forming the prevailing taste of the day in regard to works of Art, as well as the elegancies or decorations serving as accessories to domestic or church architecture. Several of the engraved works preserved in England, commonly termed sepulchral brasses, were produced by artificers of Flanders, although few similar examples are now to be found in that country.

IMPROVEMENTS IN THE CITY.

Sir,—In continuation of some observations on this subject at page 22, Vol III., allow me to state, that the intended street from Ameu-corner to Lincoln's-inn-fields is a part of a large and comprehensive plan for improving the thoroughfares of the city, the said street being intended to receive such part of the traffic from London bridge and water side commerce as will pass through an intended improvement of the line of Cannon-street and Watling-street, which will thus relieve Cheapside of many thousand vehicles, both from the west end and east end of the town.

With respect to the improved line of Gresham-street (late Cateaton-street) although not quite satisfactory, it is yet not too late to make it answer, what I believe it was intended for, namely, to receive a portion of the traffic of Newgate-street. This could be accomplished by the removal of the block of houses at the south end of the General Post Office, St. Martin's-le-Grand, and forming a street from that opening (which you will observe is close to Newgate-street) to Lad-lane, and widening the latter. The property that would be required to form such a short but useful street is not very valuable.

The partial failure of Gresham-street, in not being made more straight and spacious, may be charged on the parsimony of the citizens. If the latter would come forward in a liberal manner, and assist the city authorities to carry out the several plans of improvements with a handsome loan, instead of discouraging them by continual opposition, I am persuaded there would be no cause for disapprobation after the completion of the works, but the city would be the most convenient, the most healthy, and the most splendid in Europe.

I am, Sir, &c.,

T. I. M.

FITTEST STYLE FOR INTERIOR DECORATION.

At a meeting of the Decorative Art Society, January 14th, the following theme was discussed, "Under what circumstances in modern decoration ought the Gothic or the Italian style to be preferred." As might have been expected in the consideration of such a subject, the observations were discursive upon architectural proprieties and taste; and it was not until nearly the termination of the proceedings that the arguments became more definite. It was remarked, that a backward tendency, by an application to the earlier state of the arts, for the decorations of the new palace of Westminster, should be regretted; and it was said that selected artists were on the continent for the purpose of studying the style and manner of Giotto, Cimabue, and that school. It was argued that precedents ought to be studied, but not looked upon so much as fixed rules for embellishments, and that past efforts should rather be considered as examples of what had been applied under certain circumstances and restrictions, than as being the only ones suitable and appropriate to any recognized and imitated form in architecture; also that it ought to be open for the present age, by an application of superior drawing, execution, or colouring, to impart a new and peculiar effect to forms of another period. This argument was pursued by stating, that it was necessary only to have regard to principal lines in the arrangement of harmonising and contrasting forms of ornament, to create that unity and completeness of expression so striking when produced, but which is seldom attained, from the deficiency of scientific deliberation upon *mere* ornamental details.

A discussion then arose upon the restrictions to be regarded in fitting and furnishing the interior; and allusion was made to King's College Chapel, Cambridge, where the screen, stalls, stained-glass, &c., are in the style of the Revival, and have been condemned as displaying impure taste. It was contended, that the Gothic style would be found to impose great difficulties in rendering all modern conveniences and necessities in unison with it, and yet obtain grandeur of effect. Another question was also prominently sustained, viz. as to what extent imitative decoration in colour, such as arabesques, may be associated with the geometrical ornaments in Gothic architecture; and which, if either, should preponderate in embellishment; also, what limits ought to be regarded in the treatment of each? Several observations were also made upon ecclesiastical decorations, recently executed in and near to the metropolis; and in the description, considerable merit was said to be found in some of them. The meeting adjourned to the 28th inst., with the desire to collect further determinate opinions on this important question.

YORKSHIRE ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETY.

A quarterly meeting of the above society was held in its rooms in York, on the 15th instant; Mr. E. B. Wheatley in the chair.

After the Rev. J. Sharp, one of the secretaries, had read the minutes of the previous meeting, grants of 5*l.* towards the stained glass in Lund Church, and 5*l.* towards encaustic tiles in Maston Church, Yorkshire, were made.

The Rev. J. Fawcett (another of the secretaries) brought forward the subject of the restoration of the parish church, Bradford, Yorkshire, and exhibited two large crayon drawings of the church *as it is*, and the church *as it is to be*. The reverend gentleman stated, that above the present plaster ceiling of the nave, there was a very fine and perfect perpendicular oak roof, which it was the design of the restoration committee to open out. He suggested that a small grant made by the society towards such an object, would not only be most thankfully received, but also that it would have the effect of bringing into more public notice the claims of the society which made it. Mr. E. Smith, Acomb, York, after this gave notice of a motion for the next meeting, for the sum of 20*l.* towards this very desirable object.

The Rev. J. Fawcett then brought before the notice of the society, the *British Archæological Institute*, which proposed to hold its annual meetings in York, in the autumn of the present year. He said that he thought the Yorkshire Architectural Society would do well to render its services to the institute, and offer to it all the accommodation in its power. The committee requested Mr. Fawcett to communicate to the institute that the Yorkshire Architectural Society would most gladly offer the use of its rooms for the forthcoming session, together with any other assistance which might be considered desirable.

GAS.

Sir,—The subject of gas is of such general importance, that a few remarks thereon, suggested by the letter of "Carbon," in No. 153, will not, I trust, prove unacceptable to the readers of your interesting and well-conducted work, the circulation of which I am well aware is not confined to the building trades only.

Every impartial person will agree with "Carbon" in his remarks respecting meters. The Chartered Gas Company enforce the use of them by all their customers; and doing so has been productive of a saving to the consumer as well as advantage to the company. It would be well for all parties if no gas were to be supplied except by meter; but it is not easy to see how that system would, as "Carbon" asserts, *compel* the companies to manufacture gas of *greater illuminating* power. I should suspect it would be more likely to have a directly opposite effect, if it had any at all, which I doubt.

The illuminating, or "radiant" power of gas depends upon the proportion of carbon it contains. The atomic proportions of carburetted hydrogen (coal gas) are, hydrogen 2 + carbon 6 = 8. The proportions in oil gas are, hydrogen 2 + carbon 12 = 14; and its radiancy is from twice to four times that of coal gas, dependant upon its freshness and the sort of burner used. London gas seldom contains its due proportion of carbon, in consequence of its being an object to produce good coke as well as gas. In the northern counties, where coal is so much cheaper, coke is comparatively valueless; and there every attention is solely directed to produce gas in perfection. When I was at Liverpool, ten years ago, I could not get coke from the gas works—it was so exhausted in the retort as to be useless. Here,

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